

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

January 30, 1991

FIRMR BULLETIN B-2

TO: Heads of Federal agencies

SUBJECT: Interagency Reports Management Program

1. Purpose. This bulletin sets forth procedures for Federal agencies to follow in seeking approval of interagency reports.
2. Expiration date. This bulletin contains information of a continuing nature and will remain in effect until canceled.
3. Contents.

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4. Related material.
 - a. 44 U.S.C. chapters 29 and 31
 - b. 44 U.S.C. 3504(e)
 - c. 5 CFR 1320.16
 - d. FIRMR 201-9.202-2

TC90-1

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5. Information and assistance.

General Services Administration
Acquisitions Reviews Evaluation and Analysis Branch (KMAD)
18th and F Streets, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Telephone FTS 241-1566 or (202) 501-1566

6. Acronyms.

FIP Federal Information Processing
OMB Office of Management and Budget

7. Prescribing regulations. The Interagency Reports Management Program is derived from 44 U.S.C. Chapters 29 and 31, recognizing OMB functions under 44 U.S.C. 3504(e) and OMB implementation under 5 CFR 1320.17.

8. Purpose of the program. The purpose of the Interagency Reports Management Program is to ensure that interagency reports are based on need, are cost-effective, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.

9. Agency responsibilities.

a. FIRMR requirements. FIRMR section 201-9.202-2 requires each agency to:

(1) Obtain GSA approval for each new, revised, or extended interagency report prior to implementing the report.

(2) Designate an agency-level interagency reports liaison representative and alternate. Notify GSA in writing of each designee's name, title, mailing address, and telephone number within 30 days of the designation or redesignation. All communications concerning designees shall be forwarded to the address shown in paragraph 5. above.

b. Agency actions. In carrying out their responsibilities under the Interagency Reports Management Program, agencies should:

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(1) Review the GSA Inventory of Approved Interagency Reports to decide if a proposed report can be met by an existing report.

(2) Review existing interagency reports for possible improvements when submitting requests to extend clearances.

(3) Provide responding agencies the opportunity to comment on each proposed new or revised interagency reporting requirement.

(4) Reply within 30 calendar days to other agencies' written requests for estimates of the cost of responding to existing or proposed interagency reports.

10. Procedures.

a. Establishing or revising interagency reporting requirements.

(1) The requiring agency should request approval for proposed new or revised interagency reporting requirements by submitting to GSA at the address shown in paragraph 5. above, an original and one copy of Standard Form 360 (Revised 12/88), Request to Approve An Interagency Reporting Requirement. The form, along with supporting documents, shall be forwarded through the agency's interagency reports coordinator.

(2) GSA will review the proposal for demonstrated need, cost effectiveness, systems design, and coordination with other clearance authorities, and will ensure that the report does not duplicate existing interagency reports. GSA will assign an interagency report control number and an expiration date, return the Standard Form 360 to the agency's interagency reports coordinator, and enter the report in the GSA Inventory of Approved Interagency Reports. If GSA rejects an agency's request for a report, GSA will advise the agency in writing of the reasons for the rejection.

(3) The requiring agency should notify each responding agency's interagency reports coordinator of approved reports. The directive publishing the requirement should include the following information: (i) report purpose, title, and format; (ii) whether the report is mandatory or voluntary; (iii) interagency report control number; (iv) preparation instructions; (v) responding agencies; (vi) reporting frequency; (vii) number of copies; (viii) mailing address; (ix) due date; (x) name and telephone number of contact person; and (xi) for mandatory reports, whether it requires a negative response.

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(4) The following statement must appear prominently in the directive prescribing this requirement: "This report has been cleared in accordance with FIRMR 201-9.202-2, and assigned interagency report control number ____." If a form is needed to collect data, the agency should place the interagency report control number in the upper right corner of the form.

b. Extending interagency reporting requirements. GSA will notify the promulgating agencies 90 calendar days in advance of the expiration date of a requirement. Agencies should submit requests for extensions for new and revised reports at least 60 calendar days before the expiration date.

c. Justifying interagency reporting requirements. In accordance with FIRMR 201-9.202-2, agencies shall use Standard Form 360, Request for Clearance of an Interagency Reporting Requirement, to obtain GSA approval for each new, revised, or extended interagency report. A justification statement, explaining how the reporting costs shown on Standard Form 360 were derived, and signed by the official who requested the reporting requirement, shall be attached to Standard Form 360. The justification should:

(1) State why the report is needed and how it will be used.

(2) Describe the benefits (in dollar value if possible) expected from the information and assess the probability that the benefits will be achieved.

(3) Describe how the program will be affected if the information is not obtained.

(4) Identify any responding agencies that took part in designing, testing, and estimating the cost of the proposed report.

(5) Identify the agencies that agree or do not agree with the proposed report and summarize the reasons.

(6) Describe other reporting plans considered, including: (i) frequency of reporting; (ii) use of exception reporting; (iii) use of sampling techniques; (iv) selection of respondents; (v) obligation of respondents to comply; (vi) amount of detail; (vii) format of report; and (viii) method of transmission.

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d. Cost estimates. GSA needs cost estimates to decide if the expected value of the information is worth the cost of obtaining it. Agencies should use the following cost alternatives to identify the methods used to prepare the reporting cost estimate. Criteria for these costing alternatives are contained in the GSA information resources management handbook, Reports Management. Supporting documentation and worksheets for all cost estimates should be available for GSA review. GSA review may include the appropriateness of the costing alternative selected by the agency.

Alternatives	Characteristics
Pilot testing (estimate based on actual costs collected).	High cost reporting; full scale mechanized systems; data banks; large number of data elements; new data collection system; respondent cost may be needed for budget purposes.
Factoring (estimate based on actual costs previously collected for a comparable report).	Medium to low cost reporting; revision of a previously costed report; high degree of experience with comparable reports made by the same (one or a limited number) responding agencies; cost easy to compare with actual cost for a similar report.
Sampling (estimate based on a representative selection of responding agencies).	Low to high cost reporting; large number of respondents; new reports.
Technical estimates (estimate based on experience).	Low cost reporting; more detailed costing waived by GSA; one-time reports, limited number of respondents.

e. Discontinuing interagency reporting requirements. If an interagency report is no longer needed, the agency should notify GSA and responding agencies' interagency reports coordinators. GSA will discontinue the requirement on the expiration date unless it receives a request for an extension.

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11. Availability of forms. Standard Form 360 is authorized for local reproduction. The interagency reports coordinator may obtain supplies from GSA at the address shown in paragraph 5. above.

Thomas J. Buckholtz
Commissioner
Information Resources
Management Service

